

Appl. No. : 10/722,990
Filed : November 26, 2003

REMARKS

Claims 6, 7, 10 and 11 are amended. Claims 7 and 11 are amended to independent form without changing the scope of the claims. Accordingly, the amendments to Claims 7 and 11 do not add new matter nor raise new issues for examination. Claim 6 is amended to further recite a vapor supply line for supplying vapor from the water contactor to the alkali contactor. Support for the amendment is found in the specification, for example, at page 10, line 11, through page 12, line 11. Claim 10 is amended to further recite that the alkali contactor is configured to receive vapor from the water contactor. Support for the amendment is found in the specification, for example, at page 10, line 11, through page 12, line 11. The amendments to Claims 6 and 10 do not add new matter.

Claims 1-11 are pending. Claims 1-5 and 9 are allowed; Claims 7, 8 and 11 are objected to, and Claims 6 and 10 are rejected.

Objection to Claims 7, 8 and 11

Claims 7, 8 and 11 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but being otherwise allowable if rewritten into independent form.

Applicants have amended Claims 7 and 11 to independent form without changing the scope of Claims 7 or 11. Accordingly, the amendments to Claims 7 and 11 do not add new issues for examination. Claim 8 depends from Claim 7.

In view of the amendments to Claims 7 and 11, Applicants submit that Claims 7, 8 and 11 are now in allowable form.

Rejection of Claims 6 and 10 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 6 and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Chlanda *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 3,787,304). The Office Action states that Claims 6 and 10 are anticipated by Chlanda because Chlanda discloses vapors from an HF-producing evaporator passing through a line communicating with devices for contacting with water and alkali material.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

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Claim 6, as amended, further recites a second hydrofluoric acid vapor supply line for supplying residual hydrofluoric acid-containing vapor which has not been dissolved in the dissolution water and remains undissolved in the water contactor from the water contactor to the alkali contactor. In contrast, Chlanda's streams 28, 31, which connect the mixer-settlers 3 and 4, are to pass slurry therethrough, as described in column 2, lines 43 to 51 of Chlanda. Chlanda does not disclose a vapor supply line for supplying residual hydrofluoric acid-containing vapor which has not been dissolved in the dissolution water and remains undissolved in the water contactor from the water contactor to the alkali contactor. Therefore, the subject matter of Claim 6 is clearly structurally different from Chlanda, and, therefore, is not disclosed by Chlanda.

Claim 10, as amended, further recites an alkali contactor configured to receive residual hydrofluoric acid-containing vapor from the water contactor and bring the received vapor into contact with an alkali to produce a neutralized liquid and a dehydrofluorinated vapor, the residual hydrofluoric acid-containing vapor having not been dissolved in the dissolution water and remaining undissolved in the water contactor. As discussed above regarding Claim 6, Chlanda's streams 28, 31 are to pass slurry therethrough, as described in column 2, lines 43 to 51 of Chlanda. Chlanda does not disclose an alkali contactor configured to receive residual hydrofluoric acid-containing vapor from the water contactor and bring the received vapor into contact with an alkali to produce a neutralized liquid and a dehydrofluorinated vapor, the residual hydrofluoric acid-containing vapor having not been dissolved in the dissolution water and remaining undissolved in the water contactor. Therefore, the subject matter of Claim 10 is clearly structurally different from Chlanda, and, therefore, is not disclosed by Chlanda.

In view of the above, Applicants submit that Claims 6 and 10, as amended, are not anticipated by Chlanda.

CONCLUSION

In light of the Applicant's foregoing Amendments and Remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining

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concerns which might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: November 2, 2006

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